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The Daily

Statistics Canada

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MAJOR RELEASES

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MAJOR RELEASES

Building permits

February 2003

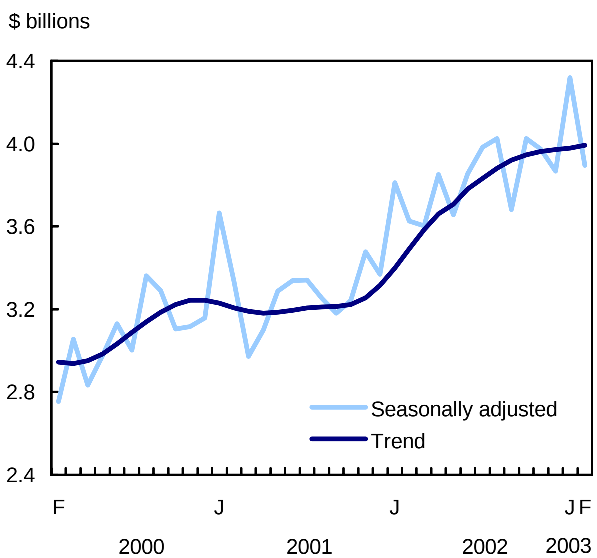
Construction intentions remained strong in February, despite declines in the value of building permits for the residential and non-residential sectors. Municipalities issued a total of $3.9 billion in building permits, down 9.8% from the record high in January.

Builders took out permits worth $2.4 billion for housing in February, down 14.2% from January. But again, the decline came on the heels of a record high in January, and February's total remained just 1.4% short of the average monthly level in 2002, which was an exceptional year.

In the non-residential sector, construction intentions fell 1.9% to $1.5 billion. However, they were still 7.0% higher than the average monthly level in 2002. A sharp drop in commercial permits more than offset gains in the institutional and industrial components.

So far this year, municipalities have issued a total of $8.2 billion in building permits, up 10.4% from the same period of 2002. It was the best showing ever for the first two months of any year, as both residential and non-residential permits were well above last year's cumulative levels. In the coming months, as these intentions materialize, the construction sector will remain healthy.

Total value of permits declines from January's record



> ***Note to readers***
>
> *Unless otherwise stated, this release presents seasonally adjusted data, which ease comparisons by removing the effects of seasonal variations.*
>
> *The Building and Demolitions Permits Monthly Survey covers 2,350 municipalities representing 95% of the population. It provides an early indication of building activity. The communities representing the other 5% of the population are very small, and their levels of building activity have little impact on the total.*
>
> *The value of planned construction activities shown in this release excludes engineering projects (for example, waterworks, sewers or culverts) and land.*

Regionally, the census metropolitan areas of Toronto and Calgary started 2003 strongly. In both areas, growth came largely from non-residential construction intentions.

Residential: Drop in both single- and multi-family permits

Construction intentions fell for both single- and multi-family dwellings in February.

The value of multi-family permits declined 33.6% from January to $562 million, their lowest level over the last 12 months. This drop followed a 23.1% increase in January.

Builders also took out fewer single-family permits, which fell 5.6% to $1.8 billion. However, putting this decline into perspective, single-family permits were also at a record high in January.

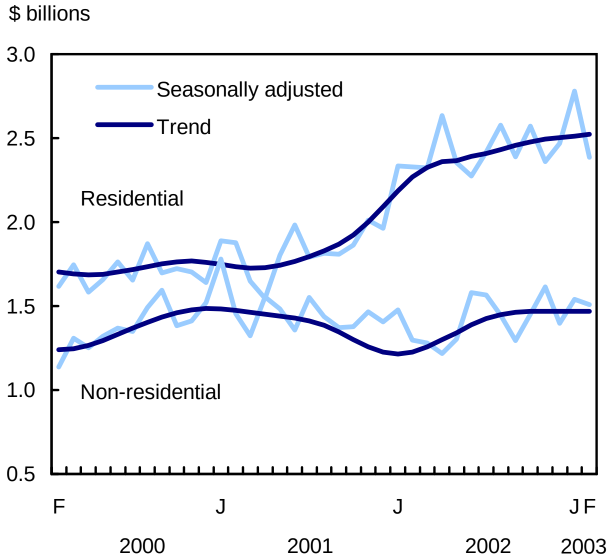
The demand for new housing remained strong, sustained by an upward trend in employment, advantageous mortgage rates, rising incomes and a low inventory of available existing housing. However, over the longer term, a low level of consumer confidence noted in February by the Conference Board of Canada could lead to less marked growth in the residential sector.

Provincially, the largest declines in the value of housing permits occurred in Ontario (-15.3% to $1.0 billion) and Quebec (-17.5% to $494 million). The declines followed January's strong gains of 22.1% in Ontario and 46.9% in Quebec. Decreases were recorded for both single- and multi-family permits.

On a year-to-date basis, the value of residential permits reached $5.2 billion, up 10.7% from the same period of 2002. The growth came from both single-family (+5.6%) and multi-family (+27.2%) permits. Since the beginning of the year, municipalities have authorized 36,841 new dwelling units, up 5.9% from the first two months of 2002 and the best start since 1990.

The largest gain among the provinces (in dollars) in the cumulative value of residential permits occurred in Quebec (+29.4%) and Ontario (+6.0%). In Quebec, the growth came from both single- and multi-family dwellings; in Ontario, the main factor was a strong demand for new apartments.

Declines in both residential and non-residential sectors



Non-residential sector: Large decline in commercial intentions

February's 1.9% decrease in the value of building permits for the non-residential sector followed a 10.2% advance in January.

Gains in the industrial and institutional components failed to offset a strong decline in commercial intentions. However, the cumulative value of non-residential permits for the first two months of 2003 was 9.9% higher than in the same period of 2002.

The value of commercial permits fell 31.1% in February to $632 million, following a 56.8% jump in January. The most significant reductions occurred in proposals for hotels and restaurants, office buildings, and trade and services buildings. Ontario showed the largest decrease (-39.1% to $233 million) following a strong January.

After declining in January, construction intentions for industrial projects rose 31.5% to $350 million in February as a result of a large increase in the manufacturing building category. Ontario posted the most significant increase (+96.0% to $246 million).

Rising vacancy rates for both office and industrial buildings in several major centres could have a negative impact on the non-residential sector as a whole. Furthermore, industrial capacity use declined marginally during the last three months of 2002. Industries operated at 82.9% of capacity in the fourth quarter, down 0.2 percentage points from the third. It was the first decline in the rate since the fourth quarter of 2001.

Following two sharp monthly decreases, the institutional component rebounded with a 48.0% gain to $528 million, the result of projects in the medical and hospital category. Ontario recorded the most significant increase (+53.0% to $343 million).

Fourteen census metropolitan areas recorded monthly declines in the value of non-residential permits. The largest drop occurred in the census metropolitan area of Vancouver, and the largest gain was in Oshawa.

Provincially, the largest decline in non-residential permits (in dollars) occurred in British Columbia (-44.6% to $108 million), driven mainly by retreats in commercial permits in Vancouver. In contrast, the largest increase was in Ontario (+12.3% to $821 million), mainly because of projects in the medical, hospital and manufacturing building categories.

The total value of non-residential building permits to the end of February was $3.0 billion, up 9.9% from the same period of 2002. Most of the advance was related to a 13.1% gain in the industrial component and a 12.0% increase in commercial. The year-to-date level of permits in the institutional component advanced 4.3%.

The largest gain was in Ontario (+23.7% to $1.6 billion) where all three components showed increases. Non-residential permits fell sharply in Quebec (-20.6% to $516 million), again because of declines in all three components.

Available on CANSIM: tables 026-0001 to 026-0008, 026-0010 and 026-0015.

Information on methods and data quality available in the Integrated Meta Data Base: survey number 2802.

The February 2003 issue of *Building permits* (64-001-XIE, $14/$145) will be available soon. See *How to order products*.

The March 2003 building permit estimate will be released on May 6.

To order data, contact Vere Clarke (1-800-579-8533; 613-951-6556; *clarver@statcan.ca*). For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Étienne Saint-Pierre (613-951-2025; *saineti@statcan.ca*), Investment and Capital Stock Division.

Value of building permits

Census metropolitan area	January 2003[r]	February 2003[p]	January to February 2003	January to February 2002	January to February 2003	January–February 2002 to January–February 2003
	Seasonally adjusted					
	$ millions		% change	$ millions		% change
St. John's	22.1	22.0	-0.3	32.3	44.1	36.6
Halifax	30.1	41.8	39.2	71.9	71.9	-0.1
Saint John	9.0	6.9	-23.6	13.5	15.9	17.9
Saguenay	5.4	6.8	26.5	11.5	12.2	5.6
Québec	108.1	58.7	-45.7	86.7	166.9	92.4
Sherbrooke	16.2	13.8	-15.0	40.5	30.0	-26.0
Trois-Rivières	9.9	11.1	11.6	17.1	21.0	22.5
Montréal	417.0	395.7	-5.1	781.7	812.7	4.0
Gatineau	50.9	24.1	-52.8	102.6	75.0	-26.9
Ottawa	111.8	134.1	19.9	215.5	245.9	14.1
Kingston	24.2	9.4	-61.1	25.3	33.6	32.7
Oshawa	45.1	167.8	271.9	107.2	212.9	98.7
Toronto	954.4	768.1	-19.5	1,446.6	1,722.5	19.1
Hamilton	123.4	173.3	40.5	189.4	296.7	56.7
St. Catharines–Niagara	64.0	44.2	-31.0	68.6	108.2	57.7
Kitchener	96.7	82.3	-14.9	177.2	179.0	1.0
London	47.6	55.2	16.0	112.5	102.8	-8.6
Windsor	57.7	64.8	12.4	131.8	122.5	-7.0
Sudbury	1.5	5.4	259.0	6.3	6.9	9.9
Thunder Bay	2.5	9.8	298.5	48.0	12.3	-74.5
Winnipeg	43.8	51.7	17.9	83.2	95.5	14.8
Regina	16.0	26.2	64.0	26.1	42.2	61.7
Saskatoon	42.6	21.8	-48.8	71.2	64.4	-9.6
Calgary	291.4	296.5	1.7	396.2	587.9	48.4
Edmonton	179.7	123.8	-31.1	291.9	303.5	4.0
Abbotsford	14.4	14.3	-0.3	26.0	28.7	10.3
Vancouver	315.6	209.7	-33.6	447.4	525.3	17.4
Victoria	54.8	46.9	-14.6	73.0	101.7	39.2

r *Revised figures.*
p *Preliminary figures.*
Note: *Data may not add to totals because of rounding.*

Value of building permits

Provinces and territories	January 2003[r]	February 2003[p]	January to February 2003	January to February 2002	January to February 2003	January–February 2002 to January–February 2003
	Seasonally adjusted					
	$ millions		% change	$ millions		% change
Canada	**4,318.4**	**3,895.2**	**-9.8**	**7,438.9**	**8,213.6**	**10.4**
Residential	2,779.1	2,385.7	-14.2	4,664.4	5,164.9	10.7
Non-residential	1,539.2	1,509.5	-1.9	2,774.5	3,048.7	9.9
Newfoundland and Labrador	32.6	29.2	-10.3	45.8	61.8	34.7
Residential	21.5	21.0	-2.2	34.0	42.5	25.0
Non-residential	11.1	8.2	-26.0	11.9	19.3	62.5
Prince Edward Island	7.6	7.0	-7.9	14.4	14.6	1.0
Residential	5.8	6.6	13.0	11.3	12.3	9.2
Non-residential	1.8	0.4	-75.5	3.1	2.2	-28.7
Nova Scotia	61.1	70.0	14.6	134.1	131.1	-2.3
Residential	43.1	51.7	20.0	102.3	94.8	-7.3
Non-residential	18.0	18.3	1.6	31.9	36.3	13.7
New Brunswick	40.2	41.1	2.1	91.0	81.3	-10.7
Residential	32.1	24.8	-22.7	68.4	57.0	-16.7
Non-residential	8.1	16.2	101.0	22.6	24.3	7.6
Quebec	860.9	746.9	-13.2	1,493.6	1,607.8	7.6
Residential	598.7	493.6	-17.5	844.4	1,092.3	29.4
Non-residential	262.2	253.3	-3.4	649.2	515.5	-20.6
Ontario	1,968.4	1,868.6	-5.1	3,409.3	3,837.0	12.5
Residential	1,236.7	1,047.2	-15.3	2,153.7	2,283.9	6.0
Non-residential	731.6	821.4	12.3	1,255.6	1,553.1	23.7
Manitoba	67.6	79.0	17.0	171.1	146.6	-14.3
Residential	46.7	43.0	-8.1	67.0	89.7	33.9
Non-residential	20.8	36.1	73.3	104.1	56.9	-45.3
Saskatchewan	85.3	66.0	-22.5	134.5	151.3	12.5
Residential	33.6	32.6	-3.0	43.5	66.2	52.0
Non-residential	51.7	33.5	-35.3	90.9	85.1	-6.4
Alberta	634.3	579.6	-8.6	1,106.3	1,214.0	9.7
Residential	396.9	366.6	-7.6	770.7	763.4	-0.9
Non-residential	237.5	213.1	-10.3	335.6	450.6	34.2
British Columbia	556.8	405.3	-27.2	823.4	962.1	16.8
Residential	361.6	297.1	-17.8	565.3	658.7	16.5
Non-residential	195.2	108.2	-44.6	258.1	303.4	17.5
Yukon	1.2	1.2	2.4	3.5	2.4	-30.2
Residential	0.7	0.7	-11.1	2.9	1.4	-52.4
Non-residential	0.5	0.6	24.0	0.6	1.0	88.5
Northwest Territories	2.4	1.2	-50.3	11.6	3.6	-68.5
Residential	1.6	0.9	-43.6	0.7	2.6	268.5
Non-residential	0.8	0.3	-64.4	10.9	1.1	-90.1
Nunavut	0.0	0.0	...	0.2	0.0	-100.0
Residential	0.0	0.0	...	0.2	0.0	-100.0
Non-residential	0.0	0.0	...	0.0	0.0	...

[r] *Revised figures.*
[p] *Preliminary figures.*
... *Figures not applicable.*
Note: *Data may not add to totals because of rounding.*

■

OTHER RELEASES

Natural gas transportation and distribution

July 2002

Data on natural gas transportation and distribution are now available for July.

Available on CANSIM: tables 129-0001 to 129-0004.

For general information or to order data, contact the dissemination officer (1-866-873-8789; 613-951-9497; *energ@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Pierre Després (613-951-3579; *pierre.despres@statcan.ca*), Tom Lewis (613-951-3596; *tom.lewis@statcan.ca*) or Lloyd Cundell (613-951-7346; *lloyd.cundell@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Cement

February 2003

Data on cement are now available for February.

Available on CANSIM: table 303-0001.

Information on methods and data quality available in the Integrated Meta Data Base: survey number 2140.

The February 2003 issue of *Cement*, Vol. 55, no. 2 (44-001-XIB, $5/$47), is now available. See *How to order products*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact the dissemination officer (1-866-873-8789; 613-951-9497; *manufact@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

NEW PRODUCTS

Cement, February 2003, Vol. 55, no. 2
Catalogue number 44-001-XIB ($5/$47).

All prices are in Canadian dollars and exclude sales tax. Additional shipping charges apply for delivery outside Canada.

Catalogue numbers with an -XIB or an -XIE extension are Internet versions; those with -XMB or -XME are microfiche; -XPB or -XPE are paper versions; -XDB are electronic versions on diskette and -XCB are electronic versions on compact disc.

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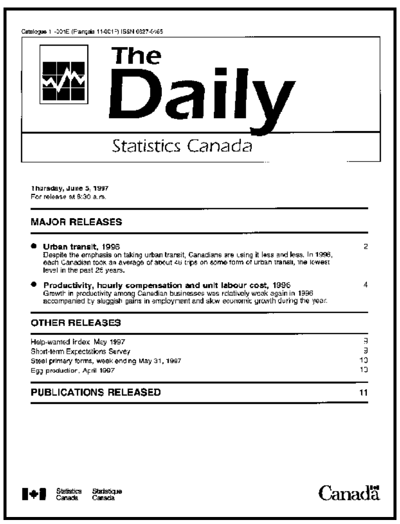
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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1996** 2
Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about 46 trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.
- **Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1996** 4
Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was relatively weak again in 1996 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

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PUBLICATIONS RELEASED 11

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